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A

DISCOURSE TO SAILORS,

ON

Pardon and Allowance

FOR

OFFENCES,

Composed on Board the CÆSAR Man of War,

COMMANDED BY RODDAM HOME, ESQ.

ON OCCASION OF THE

DISTRESSING AND ALARMING MUTINY,

AT THE FIRST, CONSISTING OF

TWENTY SIX SAIL OF THE LINE,

CHEERING AT SAINT HELEN'S,

AND ITS

Happy Termination,

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL HOWE,

TO THE PREVENTION OF

MOST AWFUL CONSEQUENCES.

Printed in order to be distributed to the Ship's Company, as prevented by unfavourable circumstances, being preached; and now published, together with an Appendix concerning the Mutinies that have followed, and the entailment of public and private misery on such insurrections.

By the Rev. T. FINCH,

CHAPLAIN OF THE CÆSAR—LATE OF SAINT MARY HALL, OXFORD.

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ADDRESS.

TO THE PUBLIC.

IF the following endeavour to be useful, in these very troublesome times, should so far meet with your approbation, as you may be pleased to peruse and judge of it favourably, making allowance for the time, the place, and the circumstances under which it was written—deeming it calculated for the purpose of propagating the principles of true Religion and Virtue in our Fleets and Armies.... I trust that by your kind subscriptions it will be so distributed throughout. It not being in my power to extend it in such manner at my own expence, I trust will be my apology for such application.

Subscriptions will be received at the Banking Houses; at Mr. FAULDER'S, *New Bond Street, and the Authour's, Great Castle Street, Cavendish Square; and a Committee will be formed from the Subscribers to direct the concern.*

TO SAILORS AND SOLDIERS.

AS far as a benevolent Public may occasion this endeavour to reach you—an endeavour to promote your temporal and eternal happiness, I hope it will have effect.—I exhort you to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest and embrace the holy word it enforces, that finally you may come to the Land of Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

T. F.

A

SERMON.

ON PARDON

AND

ALLOWANCE FOR OFFENCES.

PSALM XXXII. VERSE 1.

Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.

TO have unrighteousness forgiven, in mercy pardoned; to have sin covered, in gracious goodness looked on but with an eye of tender concern and compassionate allowance; with goodness not disposed to aggravate but to soften, is engaging to the human heart on reflection—the doctrine is not human but Divine—Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered—the sacred passage is, to the soul, comforting. Men hardened in impiety, desperately wicked, given up to reprobate minds, lost to consideration, glorying in their shame; never devoting themselves to reason and re-

flection, to pious contemplation, to holy worship, never seeking good desires—such persons may look on the Holy Scriptures as through a glass darkly, seeing but with the filmy eye of time that looketh not to Eternity—to such the wisdom of God is foolishness : Human writings are best understood as they be perused with the same spirit in which they be written—so areDivine. The book of Holy David, the Royal Authour of my Text, considered as a commentaryon the restof the Holy Scriptures, and as penned by the same inspiration, may assist to their being better understood, as may every sacred part of the whole compared with each other, than may be by any suggestions of mere human reason whatever.—Such is the superior force of persuasion in Divine Revelation, especially with a pious person, seeking not the wisdom of men but of God. In a word,let me recommend to you, my Brethren, a thorough and constant perusal of the Psalmist? The compositions are of most truly religious assistance,—the means of gracein time of need; suited to every human occasion; of prayer and supplication; of praise and thanksgiving; under sorrow to console; under the heaviest calamities to support; in joy to gladden; in prosperity to be grateful to the Giver of all good; in adversity free submission

to his will. The natural, moral, and divine reflections, are every where most admirably introduced by the sacred Authour; are so perfectly conceived, and expressed with such accurate description as to represent each subject to the life. He contemplates his own frame, its nature and action, as the great anatomist, and that once he had no being—addressing himself to his Creator, says—" In thy book were all my Members written, when as yet there were none of them." The glory of the Heavens; the changing seasons of the year; the various productions of the land; the wonderful works of God throughout the universe are ever his subjects, ever his grateful praise. The raging of the sea; the stormy wind and tempest; the occupying of ships in great waters; the skilful mariner; the wonders of the deep; the unceasing hand of Divine Providence, in the gracious goodness of Almighty God, presiding over all; his wonders towards the children of men, he speaks of with holy rapture,—in the sublime language of heaven. As thus of the natural, so we find him tracing the moral world—The universal, the national, and individual polity of Mankind, influencing men and things. The contrast is every where drawn between the beauty of holiness and the deformity of sin; between the fool, saying

there is no God, and he that believeth, feareth and loveth him, with all his heart, his mind, his soul, and his strength, worshiping him; trusting in him; calling upon his holy name, and his word expreſſing, "O God! my heart is ready—my heart is ready! I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have—and so serving him all the days of his life." If we peruse the sacred page of the beginning of the world, stating the creation of man, made in the image of God, holy and happy, and proceed to his fall; if we pass through the succeeding generations, marking the increasing degeneracy of the human race, how the once giving way to sin, the turning to the paths of vice from virtue—virtue being given up, forsaken, lost, is grievously to be deplored; if we trace the melancholy progress of encouraged vice to the heavy judgement—the destruction, in God's mighty power and wrathful displeasure, of all mankind, save eight righteous persons, Noah and his family, by a Flood—by a universal deluge of Waters; if we affectingly behold the gracious goodness of God here extended to the righteous, his heavenly promise to comfort his Holy family, not so to overwhelm the world again, and ratified by his bow in the Cloud—and yet turn to the after page of human history, to see, owing

to the fall from original righteousness, how sin spread afresh, from more and more to be abominable wickedness, as much against nature as against God, to the destruction of Sodom; in God's fierce anger, to it being consumed from off the face of the Earth, together with Gomorroh, by Fire and Brimstone from Heaven; if we read in the Holy Bible, with a weeping eye and sorrowing heart, with a truly holy concern on such, and the innumerable judgments of Almighty God, passed at sundry times, and in divers manners, to deter the wicked from wickedness; if we meditate on all the divine interferences, from judgment to judgment, and the solemn forewarnings by the mouth of Holy Prophets; and rightly consider the gracious appeals to mankind as issuing immediately from God himself, ; application not in judgement or forewarning, but in appeal;—Infinite wisdom, by Divine Revelation, appealing in condescension to the dictates of human reason, as for instance—"O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee?" If we seriously reflect, or for only a moment think on these things, we must be overcome, as was the Psalmist to say with him, "Lord, what is man that thou hast such respect unto him, or the Son of Man that thou so regardest him." But what

words have we of our own to speak of God's inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, of such means of grace and hopes of glory? The Divine plan of human salvation, of the children of sinful Adam being to have a mediator and advocate in a righteous Adam; perfect Holiness to atone and intercede with perfect Holiness; the crucified Lamb of God, being to be our High Priest in that Sacred Temple, not made with hands Eternal in the Heavens—the infinitely gracious goodness, as we reflect on the Almighty's words to Satan, Cursed is the ground for thy sake, brings me to a repetition of my Text, "Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." Now the question arises, to whom does this Divine act of Grace extend? to all mankind indiscriminately, whether Christian, or Jew, or Gentile, whether holy, or unholy? Let none be deceived—If we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us: Concerning the unenlightened, the dark Gentile, to whom the glory of the Lord has not been revealed; to whom the gospel has been unknown; never preached; such will doubtless experience Divine mercy, according to their ignorance and errour; in as much as the peculiarly favoured of God, visited by his Divine Majesty, and re-

ceiving his holy commandments, were yet faithless, unbelieving—will experience the melancholy reverse of a severe condemnation. Here Christ's own words apply, "If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin;" that is, if, by his appearance, the law and the prophets had not been fulfilled, and all he said and did had not proved him to be infinite in wisdom, and power, and goodness; God in man, in human flesh; God of God; very God, of very God—they had not had sin. We have, as charitable and informed Christians, to hope for the coming home of dispersed wandering Israel to our fold after all the Gentiles be come in; to look to our being all under one Shepherd: But, as orthodox Christians, let the plan of human redemption be by us better thought of than by many, who, by maiming the word of God in part, destroy the goodly fabric of his righteousness, preaching universal redemption; as if there were not to be hereafter a great distinction to be made between the holy and the unholy; as if every man were not to be rewarded according to his works. The impiety is too frequent to presume on such doctrine, to be more licentious, to depend on the merits of Christ solely. "What, says the apostle, shall we sin more and more that grace may abound? God forbid!" It is

true that a lively faith and good works are our revealed means to work out our own salvation; but such must be with fear and trembling, lest we reckon on such as our own sufficient righteousness, when the best may reckon themselves but unprofitable servants—the most holy may say, "I am but a sinful man, O Lord!—thou only art holy! thou only art the Lord!" To state the real terms of Salvation briefly, I must state what is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper—the indispensable requisites are "repenting truly of our former sins; stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith of God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death, and be in charity with all men." Such devout Christians, humble and meek herewith, trusting to the all-sufficient merits of Christ, as farther intercession and atonement in the Holy of Holies, come within the blessed of my text, whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. On the doctrinal part of my text, I trust, I have said sufficient to determine you, my brethren, to a steady practice of Christian Duties, to pursue the steps of our Divine master, to crucify the flesh with the passions; to adorn the pure, the reformed Church, to which, under God Almighty's blessing, we belong in the

beauty of holiness, with the Christian graces.—Be impressed, my fellow Christians, with the consideration that the Holy Psalmist's righteousness; his integrity to his God; his stated exercises of pious worship; his whole exemplary life was promoted by "faith the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"—that by which the "Elders obtained a good report, were "transformed in the renewing of their minds" living in godly obedience on earth, to be crowned with glory in Heaven. —The Psalmist's eyes were not gratified, as were Simeon's, by a sight of the Lord's Christ! He had not to say in the Holy Temple, taking the child Jesus in his arms, and blessing him, as he did with holy rapture, and saying, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation" He lived not as we live, at nigh the close of the eighteenth century of Christ—he lived before Christ was born. It is a high satisfaction to every sincere Christian to notice the whole mentioned by Moses and the Prophets and prefigured in the ceremonies of the Jewish church, concerning our blessed Lord, the Messiah's coming, being finely introduced in the Psalms, in strains of the most pious eloquence and enchanting melody. The psalms are such,

exhilerating to the heart as read; but when sung in the congregation of the people, as set to, and accompanied by church music, they are elevating to the human soul. The compositions of the psalms are such—thus king David was glad and in his glory rejoiced: But what was the genealogy of Christ? He was of the house and lineage of David! If David saw him not in the flesh, he did in the spirit;—was rejoiced to be of the seed of Abraham, and, in the religious contemplation, that yet there was to be one, of his great fore father,—one of the woman's seed, to bruise the serpent's head—one yet in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. I come finally to treat the text in a practical and close point of view, as at this particular time, touching yourselves, as forming a part of the great bulwark of the peculiar nation, to which it is your first blessing to belong. What a favoured country is this! in church and state, how happy! Having the holy religion of Christ the captain of our salvation as our church—"the Lord reigneth, let the earth be glad, let the multitude of the Isles be glad thereof" as our head, a truly christian "king and governor, one knowing whose minister he is—above all things seeking God's honour and glory" having as our state a constitution so

truly glorious, as to excite the envy of the rest of the world; a constitution not raised in confusion and haste; but framed from time to time, in the sage wisdom of counsel, held by our ancestors, under the sanction of that experience arising from generation to generation; in every respect calculated to make a people honourable and respected; great and happy. How have mighty nations in envy colleagued against us, yet have we not fallen through the support of God Almighty—he "by whom kings reign and princes decree justice." The powers that combined against us, to sever from us America; to divide the filial from the parental country; to separate people so formidable in alliance—allied by the ties of blood; by the same language; the same domestic habits and mutual commerce; and all fostered by the same government;—the powers so combined, France and Spain in family compact; and the Dutch, and a pretended armed neutrality, composing the navy of Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and other powers, gained their desired and ardent wishes—but what has been the deplorable consequence? The misery of it? from discomfited scourged France in the dismemberment of her throne,—church, state, law, order,—all national and individual comfort being gone—threatening in a

universal degree, to involve all, especially the Christian world. We yet remain a people; have fought a good fight; the fight of faith have fought as christians—for our existence as a people. Our favoured Isle, fortified by nature in so very wonderful a manner, and by the unexampled exertions of the country, under an able administration, has yet withstood: She has been most faithful to, and confident in her allies, and her own power, but trusted in the Lord Jehovah, who is everlasting strength, the authour and giver of all victory. But what has been Britain's alarm? Designing men of dark intrigue, of the mistaken politics we have seen, have been private engines to destroy her defence, her Tower of unanimity, to raise sedition.—Long have such means been used in the country, but hitherto in vain. The late attempts of these insidious persons to circulate through the British fleet, the odious opinion, that parliament was deaf to their Petitions; to a required advance of their wages, was the most atrocious of deceits. For such advance, there was an act then passing the house with extraordinary speed. But so industriously was the gross untruth spread and supported with such beguiling artful means, calling evil good, and good evil, in order to propagate mutiny, that disci-

pline gave way, disorder triumphed, and our internal divisions had soon arrived to a dangerous pitch, inviting to the invading enemy, had not the memorable interference of a noble personage prevailed. Never possibly had human wisdom, a stronger tide of prejudice to go against; and which was increased—on his not having the act of parliament, in question, with him—so productive was the sown seed of suspicion. Happily the groundless occasion of such demur, was exposed in the very time of expostulation, by the arrival of a special messenger with the act. Suspicion stood abashed.—The combined talents of wisdom and goodness hitherto exerted, and with the most amiable condescension by the illustrious peace-maker, saying—as may here be best expressed in the holy words of instruction, applying between man and man, for the obtaining a good understanding in things, especially to the doing away animosities and the promotion of good will—"come let us reason together." His nobleness of mind hitherto determined, in the words of that ancient great philosopher Epictetus, "to bear and forbear" was, if possible, now surpassed by the kind manner in which he presented his royal master's gracious pardon. Never did he shine brighter than now—not in his glory at his

victory—the pride of the British flag. Such can never be forgotten, must be remembered with sincere gratitude by the royal navy, and the country at large! will be remembered for ever. Thus providentially was calmed that rising storm, threatening, as to dismantled ships the awful deep, to overwhelm the nation—the pilot, the helm, the station of government to destroy. The means of insurrection, we have miserable instances sufficient to inform us, are unwise to pursue on any occasion whatever. A virtuous and learned Authour, who has left this, at present, greatly disordered, world, but a few years since—being asked his opinion of a certain person's writings against both our church and state very gravely returned this wise answer, that "they tended only to unsettle every thing; to settle nothing." To prove the truth of such assertion, the principles of the grossest infidelity, and most licentious ideas concerning moral government, raging in the present times under the specious title of liberty, are the principles, and the massy confusion of the world--the melancholy consequence. May discord rise no more—but unanimity as one heart, one mind, one soul, prevail in every ship throughout our fleets:—may discipline abound more and more—be every British seaman's good desire, his religious

care, looking up to him by whom kings and princes decree justice: may the words of the Gospel of Christ, "fear God—Honour the king" be in every seaman's mouth—to serve his gracious sovereign be his thought—his word—and his deed—in righteous persuasion, that "the powers that be are ordained of God;" that the various orders and degrees of men are the appointment of his divine Providence, in his wisdom and goodness that are infinite; are for the promotion of merit—of conduct, influenced by the principles of true religion, and virtue;—are for human industry and prudence, God's dispensations of temporal encouragement. In a word, therefore, to the unruly passions of sinful men, raging to level all the distinctions of mankind, be the language of God addressed; "are not my ways equal—are not your ways unequal." The British navy united thus, as one man, not to countenance ungodliness, and wrong, not to be misled again—to answer the private ends of sedition, as raised by a factious party of disappointed Polititians, may rise to more distinguished glory than ever—to be again the country's fond reliance and firmest trust—her naval host—her protection from the power of the enemy—powerful and destructive as the enemy have been to other countries. To conclude,

my brethren, I must impress upon your minds the happy circumstance of having had one, anxious to preserve your character as a quiet ship—in your commander, the calm dispassionate adviser; suggesting to you the folly in riot and excess; the wisdom in behaving decently and in order. Under the influence of his kindness to you on all occasions—for whom you have now, in your gratitude, the tender appellation of father—You would not, could not, did not give up yourselves to the unhappy conduct—some did, to their lasting disgrace. But what might you have done?—In return for every kind attention to moderate—to balance your unsettled minds—be the better seamen. Let yours be to others a ship of exemplary discipline: be it your pride to obey the duties of command—to behave in your respective stations with increased diligence in all things—to be moral and religious—so living, that when the great temporal scene of all human actions shall be eternally exposed---when every one shall be brought to Judgment,—you may be atoned for by perfect holiness,—numbered with the blessed—whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered for ever and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX.

CONCERNING the sad Mutinies that have followed the one alluded to, in the preceding Discourse, they are, however happily quelled, instances, sufficiently unhappy, to shew the entire ruin that had befallen the Nation,---if not so timely averted. To trace the sanguinary flags, streaming with the Country's destruction,--to trace them to the Nore,---to relate here the tragical scenes afresh---let me forbear? I would they were unknown---but may good arise from the evil: may they prove a warning to after times. May the miserable men, erroneous Delegates, now awaiting an awful sentence, an untimely end, not die hardened in wickedness, but sincere penitents, that, at the great assize, God may have mercy upon their souls.